



THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
GOVERNMENT HOUSE
Charlotte Amalie, V.I. 00802
340-774-0001

August 8, 2018

Mr. Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: Reply Comments in Support for viNGN and Telecommunication
Providers in the U.S. Virgin Islands—*In the Matter of the Connect
USVI Fund, WC Docket No. 18-143***

Dear Chairman Pai:

On behalf of the Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands (“Government”), I provide these reply comments in the above-referenced proceeding. These comments supplement the Government’s July 11, 2018 submittal in the same proceeding. I look forward to further discussions with the Federal Communications Commission (“Commission” or “FCC”) on these issues of great importance to the U.S. Virgin Islands (“USVI” or “Territory”).

In their July 26, 2018 comments submitted in this proceeding, Virgin Islands Telephone Corp. d/b/a Viya and its United States Virgin Islands wireless affiliates (collectively, “Viya”) propose, *inter alia*, that “the Commission should require that recipients of Stage 2 funding coordinate and cooperate regarding Infrastructure^[1] construction and access issues with other carriers, but also with other local utilities and state and federal agencies (collectively, “requesting parties”)—but only on a reciprocal basis. Specifically ... the Commission should require Stage 2 funding recipients to provide access to their Infrastructure to other entities *on the condition that* the requesting parties also provide reciprocal access to their Infrastructure to Stage 2 funding recipients. This approach will enable the FCC to leverage its authority ... to create meaningful public interest benefits ... from the reciprocal activities of entities outside the Commission’s jurisdiction, such as non-telecommunications utilities and governmental public infrastructure providers.” Viya Comments at 50 (emphasis on original).

¹ Viya defines Infrastructure to be “rights-of-way, poles, towers, ducts, conduits, trenches, and other similar infrastructure” (Viya Comments at 49).

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The Government agrees that imposing reciprocal access conditions on non-telecommunications utilities and governmental public infrastructure providers would be outside the Commission's authority. In any event, it is the express policy of the Government that electric power distribution, communication, and other utilities in the Territory be improved and modernized in ways that will harden those systems to make them more resilient to future natural disasters. To that end, in the USVI such systems in the future will be placed underground in ducts and conduits to the maximum extent feasible. Access to underground ducts and conduits constructed in the future with FCC funding could be made available for compatible use by utilities for "last-mile" infrastructure on reasonable terms and conditions similar to how access is provided to above-ground poles for overhead wiring.

I appreciate this additional opportunity to comment on the Commission's proposal, and looks forward to working with the Commission in building out the crucial "last-mile" of broadband in the U.S. Virgin Islands and improving and hardening mobile communications systems.

Thank you for your time and attention to the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Sincerely,



Kenneth E. Mapp
Governor